



**Present:** Jerry Cayer, Ron Burns, Darlene Rowsam, Joe Lawrence, Brittany Davis, Jenna Kraeger, Kevin McArdle

### **UTEP Policy Working Group Meeting**

- Attorney Kevin McArdle reviewed the changes and revisions of the solar amendment that were suggested from the previous Governance Committee Meeting on August 19, including:
  - First consideration of discount is whether or not the land is actively farmed or not
    - The committee suggested adding a definition of “actively farmed” as supporting commercial agriculture
  - Second consideration of discount is the soil type (prime, prime/drained, and important farmland).
    - The percentage discount is still undetermined (10% or 15%)
  - Adding in definitions of “prime farmland” as referred to USDA definitions

The following items were also discussed by the committee:

- LCIDA Solar Policy
  - The committee recommended adding the reason why we are implementing this process into our Solar Policy, that will then refer to the UTEP for specific PILOT terms
- The committee discussed whether we should keep “viewshed” as a consideration for incentives in our UTEP
  - It was determined that an official definition is not in place for viewshed, making it very subjective. Board Chairman Joe Lawrence and Attorney Kevin McArdle proposed that we keep viewshed out of our policy, as the Zoning Laws that municipalities will adopt covers these considerations, such as the view, screening, planting of trees/shrubs, etc.
- Governance Committee Chair Jerry Cayer made sure that the changes being implemented reflected what we were trying to accomplish:
  - Are we preserving the agricultural industry?
  - Are we preserving prime soils?
  - Are we preserving actively farmed land?
  - Is it thoughtful and planned development of solar projects?
  - The committee agreed that we were meeting these specific criteria above.
- Next Steps
  - Director Brittany Davis walked through the next steps of the UTEP process, which include:
    - Combining current revised UTEP and solar language into one document
    - Obtaining percentages of prime land from Lewis County Soil & Water by the next board meeting
    - Approving the draft UTEP at the next board meeting
    - Sending out “packet” of information and draft UTEP to taxing jurisdictions in September for public comment or feedback
    - Board member Darlene Rowsam suggested a “cheat sheet” and turnkey training for board members to help communicate the new process to taxing jurisdictions in which they live
    - Presentation to the Lewis County Board of Legislators Committee Meeting on September 15 at 4pm to gain their support of process
    - Anticipated approval of UTEP at the October 1, 2020 Board Meeting